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# ART NEEDLEWORK

## LA FARGE EMBROIDERIES.



UCH admiration has been excited by the door hangings for the new dwelling of Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt, made under the direction of Mr. La Farge, and now approaching completion in Miss Tillinghast's embroidery studio. The principal curtain, on cloth of silver, has a wide border divided into many panels filled with figures, the subjects all having reference to scenes in ancient history, which exemplify the virtue of hospitality. These figures, the majority about two feet high, are all wrought in colored silks, the hands and faces by Miss Tillinghast, the draperies and accessories by her assistants. The fineness of the work may be judged from the fact that every trait of expression and handling in the old Italian engraving from which the design has been taken, is preserved in the needlework, with the added grace of a color as strong, rich, and harmonious as the outline. A more original design, prepared for another of these curtains by Mr. Riordan, consists of a heavy festoon of flowers, leaves, and fruits, the red seeds of the pomegranate gleaming among apples, grapes, and ears of corn. This also has been carried out in colored silks on silver, in this case mainly by Miss Savage. The festoon is framed by a border, in the Renaissance style, of bunches of fruit and foliage, cornucopias and branches of oak-leaves (Mr. Vanderbilt's crest) in silver appliqué on antique purple-velvet. Above this there is a band, composed of nondescript sea-monsters, supporting a shield. These are wrought in a patchwork of colored silk and satin, plush, and gold and silver cloth. Another curtain has a scroll-work of silver and gold embroidery, enriched with small wreaths of flowers in natural colors, and having the background, also, cleverly toned by hand. A fourth work, a dryad bending a branch of oak, designed by Mr. La Farge himself, has not yet been carried farther than the cartoon. The hangings for Mr. Vanderbilt's water-color room in fawn-colored plush, embroidered with gold in imitation of old Venetian stamped leather, have also occupied Miss Tillinghast's establishment for some months. They harmonize very finely with the Sienna marble and Mexican onyx of the walls and columns.

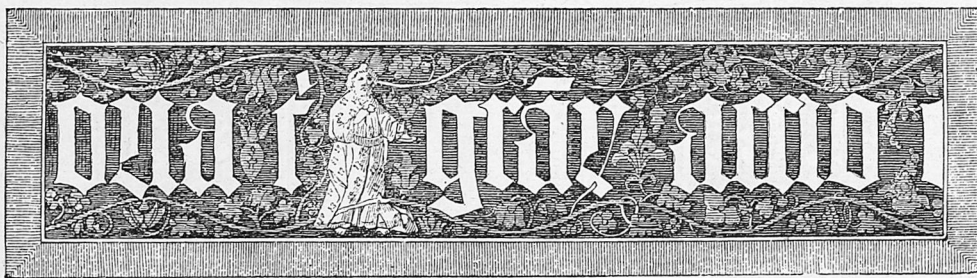
Beside these works for Mr. Vanderbilt, Miss Tillinghast has carried out within the past year a very important landscape design by Mr. Riordan, showing a dark foreground and heavy masses of foliage against a lovely sunset sky, with a flight of swallows. The amount of air and relief, obtained for the most part by flat patches of silk of great size, is surprising, and few would have believed it possible to produce such results by such means. The ground is filled, in part, with large flowers, embroidered over the patchwork. The birds and much of the foliage have been treated in the same manner, and one of the most remarkable things about the curtain is the bold way in which colors, which are intended to recede, and which do recede, are loaded on in cases where the work would be too much cut up into patches, if they were not wrought in embroidery. The silks, the gold and silver cloth, and everything used in these beautiful productions, are of American manufacture, with the sole exception of the Japanese gold thread and the old Spanish velvet.

A set of bed-hangings, ordered by a Chicago lady, and now being made by Miss Tillinghast, is also worthy description. These hangings revive the old-fashioned bed valance, curtains, and tester. The material is a silver-gray silk, bordered in all the pieces with pale pink plush. Within this, on the silk, is a design, a sort of spiral of two lines, making diamonds at the points of intersection. This is worked with a pink silk rope twisted with silver and wrapped with gold, as thick as the little finger. From these diamonds

proceed branching leaves of silver and gold, enclosing on one side a blue violet, and on the other a primrose of palest pink in the finest silk embroidery.

## LONDON NEEDLEWORK NOVELTIES.

EMBROIDERED or painted bellows are very much the fashion nowadays in London, and no artistic fireplace is without them. Neither, one might say, is any bibelot-laden étagère or cabinet without one, the modern use of bellows being not so much to blow fires, as to blow the dust from all the daintinesses of artistic boudoirs and drawing-rooms. A pair of embroidered or gracefully-painted bellows certainly makes the dusting of a room a more æsthetic affair than the service generally rendered cleanliness by a fierce-armed Bridget and her ragged duster, or even her feather brush. These artistic bellows are genuine in every respect, not toy imitations. They are small, with gilded nozzles,



ANTEPENDIUM BORDER OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY GERMAN TAPESTRY.

or nozzles of shining brass, and are made of the usual elm-wood. When embroidered the upper and under sides are covered all over with the silk, satin, or velvet upon which the designs are worked. This silk or velvet is cut to the size and shape required, and the edges, glued or tacked to the edges of the wood, are concealed with a thick row of tiny brass-headed tacks, or with gold or silver braid. One pair, seen at the London Decorative Needlework Society's rooms, was covered with delicate blue velvet, and wrought in the ordinary over-stitch in exquisitely blended shades of bronze and pale amber silk. The designs were birds, scarcely known to science, but broad-winged and of graceful aerial poise, and flowers with broad petals and large voluptuous buds. Flow-

It was a full yard in length and made to hang over the owner's arm, or over the arm of her chair or sofa. There was an appliqué strip of yellow embroidery shot with gold, with a fringe of gold, at each end, and the rings which slipped back and forth, just like old-fashioned silk purse rings, were heavily worked in purse silk.

Beside these there were book-covers, removable at will. Some were intended to disguise the crude red of popular continental guide-books, which color, in the sight of the foreign hosts who prey upon tourists, is like a scarlet rag to an irritated bull. They were of soft silk worked in the same material, some with gold-colored leaves and flowers—one with blue forget-me-nots—amid a maze of feathery green foliage. There were also sofa-backs worked in Dacca silk on crash, with a ground of gold, the design a wayward brier with brown leaves.

One very attractive screen panel can scarcely be described in words. The ground was moonlight satin, the design a large, decorative stalk of common pasture thistle. The great Gothic leaves

were treated with realism enough to express every iota of their quaint angularity and ugliness, yet with such artistic reticence as gave them a charm not theirs by nature. The large blossoms were set, some thickly, till their purple spines looked rich and soft, others sparsely, the very symbols of the stony, stunted field from whose hard heart this strange, stiff, ungracious beauty might have pushed itself.

For al fresco five-o'clock teas, or for teas indoors if one will, there are the most charming little spirit-lamp screens that one can imagine. They are set in miniature frames like folding fire-screens, and may be made to entirely ensphere the teakettle or only to guard it on the windward side. Some of the miniature panels are worked with amusing designs—a small æsthetic maid or matron in willowy attitude before a colossal Japanese teapot, a thrifty tea plant bearing cups of ready-made and steaming tea, or the old, old Polly putting the old, old kettle on, in a Queen Anne costume, as interpreted by Walter Crane.

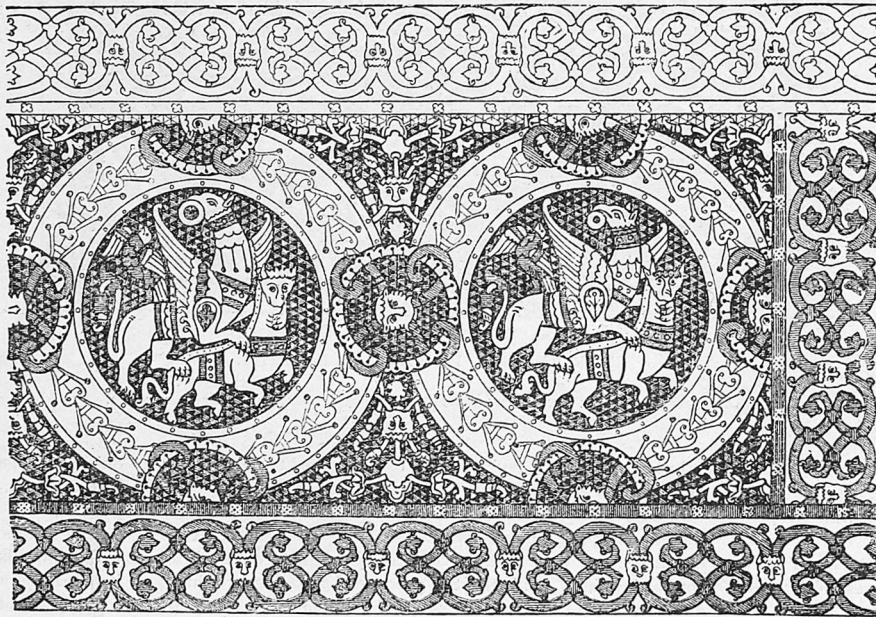
M. B. W.

## OLD TAPESTRIES AND NEEDLEWORK.

THERE is a very marked contrast between the two examples of tapestry shown herewith. In the border from a German fifteenth century antependium, the figure

is singularly life-like, and the fruit and foliage traceries surrounding the text are delicate and graceful. In the fragment of a "parement de chœur" from the St. Géréon Church of Cologne, now preserved in the South Kensington Museum, and believed to be the oldest example of tapestry in existence, the design is extremely intricate, and the figures are so conventional as to be almost grotesque. The central group, composed of a griffin seizing a lion, is supposed to typify the struggle between paganism and Christianity, but it would not be easy to detect any significance in the complex involutions and quaint visages which make up the rest of this Byzantine eleventh century design. It will repay close examination, however, in all its details.

The illustration on the following page represents an embroidered linen table-cloth belonging to the fine collection of M. Bocher, shown at the recent exposition of the Union Centrale des Arts Decoratifs in Paris. This curious combination of birds, plants, and fleur-de-lis scrolls, makes up a notable example of Italian work of the beginning of the sixteenth century. Peculiarly quaint is the fringe of tiny birds and plants forming the inner and outer border.



FRAGMENT OF ELEVENTH CENTURY TAPESTRY OF BYZANTINE DESIGN.

IN THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

ers and birds were outlined with a delicate thread of silver, and a gleam of silver ran all through their forms. Another pair was of dull, yellowish-green silk, and was wrought with aquatic birds and broad-disked river flowers limned with gold.

Among the other objects shown at the Needlework Society's rooms were the old purse-shaped work-bags, treated in the modern artistic spirit, till they were as pretty adjuncts of a toilet or as melodious notes in a "symphonic" room as if such were their sole purpose. One was of green satin sheeting, a "flatted" green, if one might so say, lined with soft, mustard-colored silk.

THE unpractised designer in embroidery should be content with simple patterns and few colors—distinct suggestive forms, softly not harshly defined, and not crossing or intermingling. Strong contrasts should be avoided, but if absolutely desired, should be, as it were, gradually approached. If the ground color be very light, with flowers and leaves in dark rich colors, an edging of a lighter shade to all patterns will prevent harshness in the contrast. If many hues are chosen for embroidery on a colored ground, a general edging of white or yellow will conduce to an even surface of tone.



## NEEDLEWORK NOVELTIES IN NEW YORK.

THE reopening of the rooms of the New York Decorative Art Society has brought to view some beautiful and unusual pieces of needlework. Many of these are from South Kensington, and others are after designs by William Morris, and all show a decided advance on the work of previous exhibitions. One of the most luxurious pieces is a piano cover of white cloth with a border by William Morris, about five inches wide, ornamented with conventionalized poppies in tones of purple and violet. The flowers are given in full front view with their prominent seed vessels, and again in perspective. In every flower there is a new disposition of the tints, giving that constant change so agreeable in any large work. The foliage is skilfully arranged to make a scroll-like ornament between the intervening flowers. The embroidery is done in silks, and is nothing more than any skilful needlewoman could accomplish; of course an artistic eye is required to arrange the colors.

A dark red plush scarf table-cover has a border of Damascus red plush. On this are applied patches of the palest pink and blue, the two meeting in irregular lines. Over this is a luxurious ornament of open flowers, resembling the morning-glory. These are embroidered in pale salmon pink, warm blues and faint greens running over the three plushes and giving a fine, mosaic-like effect.

Gold is used on almost everything, chiefly in the centres and as outlines which are always couched down, two threads of the gold being generally taken together. For sofa cushions, Chinese fret-patterns are made with gold couchings covering the surface, but leaving spaces in which a single flower is embroidered. For example, a rich, moderately light-olive is used for the cushion, some single-petalled flowers in pale yellow pink in the spaces.

A scarf table-cover of a yellow pink satin much used in decorative work has a solid close embroidery in silver thread outlined with gold. In the centres of the silver embroidered ornament pale blue and pink silks are introduced, giving charming variety to the color, which is exceedingly delicate throughout.

A striking design is seen on two screens at the Decorative Art Society, and the manner in which it is worked out is of even more importance. The handsomer of these screens in material has for a ground a peculiarly soft olive satin. On the two outer leaves the design is a large conventionalized plant, having crimson flowers with overlapping petals and prominent leaves. All the lines of the flowers are worked out with short, slightly slanting stitches, which are deep red toward the stem, and lighter at the top, following out the natural laws of light and shade. This, however, serves practically only as an outline, which is further marked by a line of gold couching on the outside; the leaves and stems are in brown and olive, and are carried out in the same way; the stems, however, are solid Kensington work. The centre panel has a daisy-like flower and foliage conceived in what may be called an heroic style, and finely drawn. All the tints are lighter here, the olives of the foliage being more yellow brown, and the flowers quite light cream white, each petal outlined with gold.

The corresponding screen is on green felt, and the embroidery is done in crewels. This decoration is to be commended as bold and effective, without requiring much work.

A new method of using the darned stitch is shown on a piece of white satin sheeting. The design is a bold flower and foliage, not the sunflower, but as large and striking. This is outlined in buttonhole stitch with yellow silk. The ground is then darned over with dull red filoselle, the stitches having a slight slant and completely covering the ground; this gives to the ornament its relief.

Outline stitch is still used. A piece of the same satin sheeting whose cream tint is very agreeable, has a border in a striking design of wheels signifying flowers, and leaves in which regular veins are outlined, all in the stiffest manner, but with quaint effect in dark blue silks. This can be repeated in any of the art shades, and makes an interesting ornament at comparatively little cost.

Miss Caroline Townsend exhibits three portières. Two of them, with designs in roses and poppies in vases of Japanese material, are, in composition and color, much like the work she exhibited last spring. A newer work by her is a portière in cream tapestry stuff. The ornament which is massed below the centre, is of large lilies shading from orange up to creamy white. This is done with a view to perspective. Some of these are simply outlined, and the shading indicated, others are worked out boldly. As a background a species of cross darning or basket-stitch of heavy crewels in faint pinks is worked in. The lower part of the curtain leading from this is light pink with tapestry cloth.

Noticeable, also, among the heavier pieces are two mantel lambrequins of dark red plush. On one are flags and foliage slanting in one direction, the flowers being in different tints ranging from blue to yellow brown. The other lambrequin has a rich outlined design in browns with gold outlining and gold centres.

In work on linen there are some beautiful designs by William Morris. One is a buffet-cover with drawn work, finished with

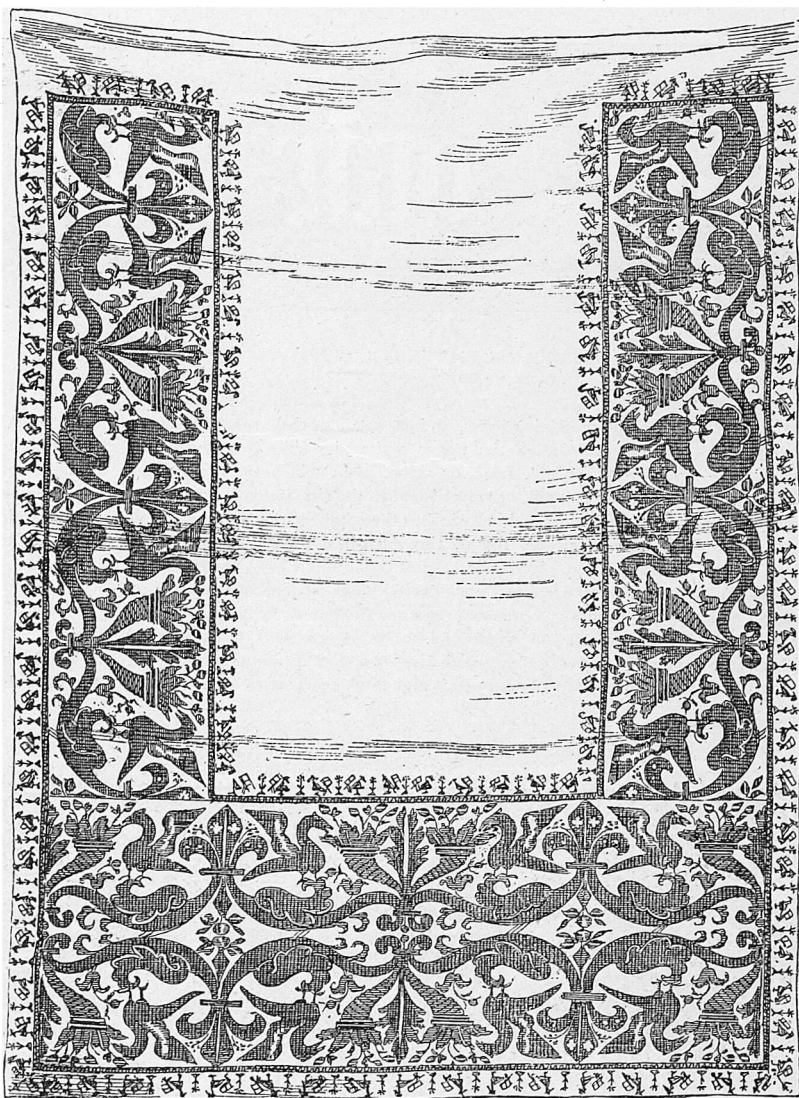
Smyrna lace. The ornament is a beautiful mass of curving lines, suggesting foliage filled in with pale silks of spring-like greens in Kensington stitch. Other designs by William Morris are carried out in the same way, the silks being English and warranted to wash.

Other pieces show a revival of old Dutch work. The designs are usually in figures, these being humorous and grotesque. The work is heavier than outline stitch, buttonhole being used, and the solid over-and-over work. Other conventional designs have the ornament marked out in two lines. The centres are filled with over-and-over stitch, sometimes a quarter of an inch broad, in yellow, pink, and blue cottons, also warranted to wash, and these are outlined with a slender line of deep blue or pink always of the contrasting color. Sentences in German text usually accompany this work. The fact that it is so substantial and adapted to frequent washings will commend it to housewives.

M. G. H.

## NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

COMBINATIONS of cross-stitch and drawn work still hold their own, and the introduction of a wide variety of canvas-like materials affords the worker much scope in this pretty method of decoration. A table-cover of silk canvas has a double drawn-work border, and on the intervening spaces is worked, in colored silks and gold thread, a quaint pattern in cross-stitch taken from a Russian towel.



EMBROIDERED LINEN TABLE-CLOTH.

ITALIAN WORK OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. IN THE COLLECTION OF M. BOCHER.

In Russia a much-embroidered towel is used to hang in front of the towels in ordinary use; for this purpose one has been made with a design of stiff scrolls and geometrical figures, outlined by running stitches in colored washing cotton. The ground between the patterns is then entirely covered by a spaced cross-stitch in contrasting tints. This effect is produced by leaving two threads of canvas between every cross, and filling them up in the following row. The towel is finished by an edge of drawn work, and a fringe of long tassels knotted from the loose strands of the unravelled stuff.

For a chair-back, use toile Colbert in a soft gray shade, with a border of drawn work. Around the edge work a border of heraldic animals, in cross-stitch of one-colored silk—either blue, brown, or ruby-red. This idea may be amplified into a table-cover with excellent results.

It is now quite a matter of fashion to find upon a lady's work-table a series of dainty piles of breakfast and dinner napkins, or serviettes for lunch, awaiting a monogram or crest in embroidery from the hand of the fair owner. Dozens of more homely hand-towels have been more than once seen of late in the same unwonted spot. It is a satisfaction to observe this practical turn of the decorative embroidery mania. There is probably no housewife who is proof against the charm of neatly-folded

napery, shining with the subdued lustre of its own quality, not with the vulgar gloss of starch. But, in our country, and in our generation, there are few who can boast of leaving their own sign-manual in the way of fine needlework marking upon such treasures.

To mark ordinary hand-towels, one can make for oneself a stencil of card-board, pricking on it an outline of the initials previously drawn in ink or pencil. Through the holes thus made, rub with a spool-end, covered with chamois skin, any red, blue, or black powder; indigo from the laundry will serve, or charcoal, powdered; this leaves an outline of the letters, which it is well to secure, upon the spot, by going over them with pen and ink. Thus, having dispensed with the services of the stamping shop, you are independent enough to complete the task. Work the letters with fine stem-stitch in blue or red ingrain cotton, and if you wish to elaborate them, fill in with French knots. To mark in cross-stitch, it is easiest to work over canvas, afterward withdrawing the threads. It is effective to work the upper portion of the fringe with the same colored cotton.

The cover for a duchesse dressing-table with toilet mats to match, is made of écu oatmeal cloth, embroidered with Russian traceries of blue and red cotton, and trimmed with red and blue Russian lace. The bed-cover in the same room is worked to match, having the advantage of washing well.

A decided novelty is the adoption of blankets into the world of decoration. We, in America, know well the effect that may be produced by one of those softly-dyed, fine-webbed Navajo blankets,

brought by travellers from the far West, when thrown across a sober-hued couch. But in default of these it is possible to have a blanket, dyed of any tint that may be selected, and to superadd embroidery in silk and crewel that will make of it a most luxurious lounge covering. A carriage rug was made of a blanket dyed dark blue, bound with darker blue velveteen, and worked with sun-flowers in outline. A portière of deep Burgundy-red blanket was framed and banded with plush of a darker shade of red, and decorated with a conventional band of old gold crewel work.

Some beautiful library curtains in mahogany-colored plush have an appliqué design of conventional honeysuckle in pinks and grayish greens, placed like a frieze just below the curtain rings, and are supplemented by curtain loops in the same embroidery. Others are made of dark blue brocaded jute velours, having a decoration similarly applied at the top. In this case leaves in grays and browns have a darned background.

A fanciful screen, to serve at the hour of tea-drinking, has attached to a brass rod a full curtain of amber silk stuff embroidered with laid-work in different colored silks, the patterns outlined in gold thread.

A sofa-back is worked in Dacca silk on crash with a honeycomb ground, the design, outlined in pink and brown, being Australian brier with foliage. The fringed ends are knotted and tufted with Dacca silk. A sofa cushion is in mustard-yellow cloth, almost covered with laid work embroidery in various tints of silk, with outlines of gold thread.

A new wall-pocket is shaped like a pair of bellows, the back covered with Turkish satin, the front, which hangs forward, covered with embroidered plush. If preferred, a design in oils may be painted on the plush. The full sides of the pocket, holding back and front together, are made of satin, and the nozzle and handle are of brass.

A novelty from Paris, but one which can hardly be commended, is a plush cover for a hanging basket meant to contain artificial flowers and foliage plants. On this are embroidered arabesques of gold and silk, and tassels of gold and silk are pendent from it.

A screen of dark holly-green satin has yellow laburnum, white acacia, and May blossoms worked on the three panels. An exquisite transparent screen for before the fire is made of white bolting cloth, decorated with a design of growing rice, half painted, half embroidered in silk. A sort of dado finishes this design, in which lines of silver thread simulate water; water-lilies outlined in silk rest on it, and a few silver and gold fishes with jewelled eyes are seen at the base.

The Pauline, a new costume for baby girls, is made of fine, white cotton twill, and stamped for working with a design of purple violets in graceful sprays. The embroidery when complete is quite elaborate, including a pattern upon the collar and cuffs, sides of the bodice, and on a succession of little tabs or points overlapping the kilted petticoat. For a two-year-old boy comes a pretty shirred apron in the same material, to be similarly adorned with sprays of flowers in embroidery silks, the effect produced being very pleasing.

A very pretty work-basket is mounted upon brass-tipped legs like those so often seen upon four o'clock tea tables now. The sides of this basket are lined with shirred old-gold satin, and at the bottom is seen a lining of claret-colored plush with appliques of Turkish embroidery. At the edges are draperies and pockets of the same plush, lined with old-gold satin and adorned with appliques. Cords and tassels of deep red chenille and gold complete this elegant little appendage for a boudoir.